

## **8th OISTAT THEATRE ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION 2011**

### **Introduction**

The OISTAT Theatre Architecture Competition (TAC) is an international ideas competition, aimed at students and emerging practitioners, which is organised every four years by the Architecture Commission of OISTAT (International Organisation of Scenographers, Technicians and Theatre Architects).

For more information on the activities of OISTAT please see:  
<http://www.oistat.org>

We are pleased to announce the launch of the next TAC, to be completed in 2011.

Selected entries of TAC are exhibited and cash prizes awarded at the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) the major international exhibition of scenography and theatre architecture, which takes place every 4 years in Prague in the Czech Republic. The next PQ is due to take place in June 2011. It is considered by many to be the most important theatre design event in the world. For more information please see:  
<http://www.pq.cz>

### **Competition Theme for TAC 2011**

Most spaces for the performing arts (drama, music theatre, dance, concerts and other forms) are housed in specialized buildings, built for the purpose.

While there will always be a need for these buildings, there is increasing interest amongst theatre practitioners in the use of existing buildings and settings, which are not purpose built theatres, to present productions. These settings, sometimes known as 'found space', can often provide a unique atmosphere, which resonates with a particular production or style of presentation, in a way that may not be possible in a conventional theatre. While these spaces may lack the technical infrastructure and

facilities of a theatre, they can make up for this through the atmosphere provided by the special character of the place, its interaction with the performance and the opportunity to explore less conventional forms of presentation. Many new theatres are also created by converting existing buildings, where the character of the original building contributes significantly to the special atmosphere, and provides a sense of continuity with the past.

These are the basic themes to be explored in this competition.

Provocation by Professor Dorita Hannah, Architecture Commissioner for PQ 2011

*"The auditorium is often considered a static object designed to contain performance. But performance cannot be contained... it exceeds architecture, especially in this age of media spectacles, fluid technologies and uncontainable bodies. So what role does the auditorium now play other than forcing us to perform as well-behaved spectators? If we acknowledge that architecture itself performs, as space-in-action, then perhaps we can explore new strategies for experiencing live performance as a more dynamic, creative and communal spatial event."*

### **The Brief / Overview**

Competitors are asked to design a theatre space for a particular type of performance, which must be defined by the competitor. This may be a conventional performance or something more experimental, using a range of media and technologies.

In this way it is hoped to encourage a deeper understanding of the relationship between the performance itself and the space, which it inhabits.

The aim is to create a space, which supports the chosen type of performance in the best possible way. It should explore how a performance space could be designed to

reflect the cultural ethos of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and whether performances in our time are best housed in purpose designed theatres or can take advantage of more open, flexible settings, to meet the needs of artists and respond to an increasingly global information culture.

In particular, competitors should attempt to answer the question on why people continue to choose to visit live performances, despite the overwhelming amount of digital entertainment now available to them. Central to this is the sense of community provided by a shared experience.

In this way the TAC will underpin the central theme of PQ's Theatre Architecture Exhibition, exploring the question - "Now / Next - Performance Space at the Crossroads"

For more information please see:  
<http://www.pq.cz/en/architecture.html>

This is a competition to create and design a place for a particular type of performance and competitors are encouraged to inform themselves of the precedents and needs of their selected performance type.

Competitors can choose whether to work with the existing building or to propose a new design on the site. They can choose to design either a permanent building or a temporary installation. This is an ideas competition and there is no intention to build the winning entry. Competitors are therefore encouraged to make proposals which are didactic, innovative and experimental.

Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed.

#### **The Site**

The site for the competition is Prague Crossroads, formerly St Anna's church,

which will also be the site of the Architecture Section at PQ 2011.

St. Anna's is an important landmark in the cultural heritage of Prague and is a protected building. It was originally built as a gothic church, and has since been adapted to other uses.

It is now used as a cultural centre in Prague, which is owned by The National Theatre, and is operated under the title of 'Prague Crossroads' by The Dagmar and Vaclav Havel Foundation VIZE 97, to promote the crossroads of different cultural influences, intersecting in Prague over the centuries.

St. Anna's is therefore a space with a high cultural significance, acting as a focus for cultural forces in Prague.

The prize winning entries and a selection of other entries will be exhibited in the building, during PQ 2011, giving them a special resonance with their setting and a prominent place within this prestigious international exhibition.

Competitors are invited, at their own cost, to visit Prague during PQ 2011 to experience the architecture exhibition and see the real site. Visitors will also have the opportunity to participate in design workshops on theatre architecture and other related topics, which will be organized during PQ 2011, as part of the event. Further details of events will be available later on the PQ website.

Drawings and photos of St. Anna's will be available to download from the TAC home page on the OISTAT website before the official start of the competition. (see Competition Rules, item 8)

#### **Key Issues**

Successful performance spaces have some very particular requirements, which competitors are expected to understand and explore in order to create an environment in which the unique interaction between audience, artists and technology, which

constitutes a live performance, can flourish. Some key issues to be considered are set out below:

#### **Audience Cohesion**

The way in which an audience is arranged, in relation to the performance, plays a key role in creating a successful atmosphere where audiences feel engaged by the performance and performers can communicate well with them. How does this relationship work and what factors are at play in a successful performance space? This can take many different forms but the key is maintaining an appropriate human scale where a performer can command a whole audience. To achieve this the audience must be as close as possible to the performance and be able to see and hear well. Competitors are asked to highlight how their entries will support this essential relationship.

#### **Sightlines**

To see well the audience must be arranged so they can all see the performance. Not only must their view be free of obstructions, but they must also be sufficiently close to the performers to distinguish their gestures and appreciate the scenic or architectural space they occupy. There are many different ways in which this can be achieved, depending upon the type of performance and the configuration of the space, but the essential principles are constant.

#### **Acoustics**

Good hearing is as important as good seeing. Different performance types require different acoustic conditions to be best appreciated. Speech, for instance, requires a less reverberant environment than that required for un-amplified music. Where a space is to be used for a range of different performance types some means of varying the acoustic may be necessary. The acoustic of a room is determined by its shape, volume and materials. St. Anna's is a church with a high reverberation time, caused by its large volume, and this issue will need to be considered. Recorded or live sound effects

and music will also play an important role in many productions.

#### **Technical Requirements**

Most performances rely upon some form of stage technology to facilitate them. This includes stage lighting, projection and sound systems and mechanical systems, which are used to suspend or move scenery or to reconfigure the room. Provision for these systems needs to be integrated into the design and must be accessible and safe to use.

#### **Interpretation**

The style and type of performance and the way it uses a particular space to interpret a particular piece or to tell a story, including the use of lighting, sound and scenography, is a key consideration.

#### **The Purpose**

You must state what type of performance(s) the design will be used for. Establishing a clear link between the performance and the architecture is a key aim of the competition. The design may be specific to a single performance, a particular performance type or a range of different uses. Drawings of the theatre space should illustrate how it will be used for a performance.

#### **Accommodation**

The size of the theatre space and other accommodation will be constrained by the existing building, the site and the performance type but the following requirements need to be considered:

- A space for a live performance with an audience, either sitting or standing.
- Facilities for the audience, including toilets and the sale of tickets, food and drink.
- Technical installations for the performance (lighting, sound, mechanical systems).
- Accommodation for performers.
- Safe evacuation of all occupants in an emergency.
- Access for people with disabilities.

## Competition Rules and Conditions

1. The Architecture Commission of OISTAT (the International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Technicians and Theatre Architects) is promoting an international ideas competition in a single stage, open to architects and students of schools of architecture. Collaborations between architects and other theatre practitioners such as directors, designers, technicians, actors, dancers, musicians, or students in those fields, will be welcomed. Architects or students associated with members of the jury are not permitted to enter. Jury members will be announced on the OISTAT website before the official start of the competition.

### 2. Documents to be Submitted

#### 2.1 Drawing requirements

- a Plans of each level, at least two sections and important elevations to a scale of not less than 1/100.
- b three-dimensional images of the building and the theatre space.
- c Auditorium studies showing it in use for a performance or several performances.
- d Site plan to a scale of 1/500
- e Models cannot be accepted, although photographs of models can be included.
- f Drawings and text documents must not carry any means of identifying the entrant(s) apart from the code number referred to in para 2.2 (c) below.

- 2.2 Competition entries may only be submitted on a CD-ROM which should be clearly labelled with the code number, both on the CD and its cover.

Every entry shall comprise an electronic copy of the following:

- a A single panel at AO size (1189 x 841 mm / 46.81 x 33.11 inches) in vertical (portrait) format submitted in pdf format at 300 dpi resolution). The document itself and the pdf file will be identified by a random six-figure code (e.g. 123456/dwg.pdf)
- b A short written description of the project, the performance to be housed and an explanation of the design concept (maximum 200 words). The text will be incorporated on the panels but must also be submitted separately as an A4 size Word document. The document and the pdf file will be identified by a random six figure code (e.g. 123456/text.doc)
- c Both the drawing and text documents and the files containing them are to be identified by a code of six numbers to be chosen at random by the competitor(s), appearing in the top right hand corner of each document, 10mm high.
- d A completed entry form in Word format, including the same code no. as in para 2.2 (c) above. The entry form can be downloaded from the OISTAT website. In cases where competitors form a team, all collaborators must be named. Information provided here will be used in all publications, so please double check spelling!
- e A closed envelope containing the completed entry form with the same six figure code (e.g. 123456) on the outside.
- f All text is to be in English.

#### Advisory

Competitors are reminded that if their entries are selected for publication, they may be reduced, in whole or in part, to A4 size or smaller. Competitors should check their layout and line weights on a printer to ensure the quality of printing, if selected for the exhibition or catalogue.

2.3 This is an ideas competition and there is no intention that the winning entry will be built.

2.4 Entries will not be returned by OISTAT. Competitors should retain copies of their work.

### **3. Competition Schedule**

3.1 The competition documents and conditions will be available from 1 July 2010 on the OISTAT Website:  
[www.oistat.org/content.asp?path=c1qgp8ps](http://www.oistat.org/content.asp?path=c1qgp8ps)

3.2 Competitors questions of can be sent by email to TAC2011@oistat.org Questions should be written in English and must be received no later than 1 October 2010.

3.3 The answers to the questions will be posted on the Website from 1 November 2010.

3.4 Entries must be despatched by mail on or before 11 March 2011. Late entries will not be considered.

- Entries will be disqualified if the postmark is dated after 11 March 2011.
- Entries must be received at the address given under item 3.6, no later than 25 March 2011.

Competitors are responsible for ensuring their entry is delivered on time.

3.5 The entry fee for the competition is €50 per entry. Competitors will pay via paypal on the OISTAT website, no later than 11 March 2011, using their random six figure code no. to identify their payment. Entries submitted without an entry fee will not be considered.

3.6 All entries and payments will be handled by a third party and the jury will not know the identity of the entries.

Competitors should send their entries to this address free of fees for the recipient:

Theater Projekte  
Daberto + Kollegen  
Augustenstraße 59  
D-80333 München  
Germany

Entries must bear the six-figure code as mentioned under 2.2 c on the outside of the envelope and the words 'TAC 2011, not to be opened before 25 March 2011'

3.7 The six-figure codes of all received entries will be published on OISTAT's website when the entry fee has been paid.

### **4. Prizes**

4.1. The first prize will be €5,000, the second prize will be €2,500 and the third prize will be €1,000. There will be three additional prizes of €500 each. In addition to these prizes, there will be honourable mentions. The jury reserves the right to modify the distribution of prize money, within the same total amount and number of prizes.

4.2 The results of the competition will be announced on the OISTAT website from 16 April 2011. Prizes will be presented at the Prague Quadrennial in June 2011 at a ceremony to be held in St Anna's church, and paid electronically to those unable to attend, after the prize-giving.

### **5. Publication**

5.1 The competition entries will become the property of OISTAT and may be published and exhibited in any country at the discretion of OISTAT.

5.2 OISTAT will respect and acknowledge the copyright of the participants.

## **6. Acceptance of Conditions**

6.1 By submitting an entry, participants or participating teams will:

- a agree to the rules and regulations as set out in this programme.
- b declare that the proposed design is their own work.
- c agree to accept the decisions of the jury as final.
- d agree not to disclose their identities or publicise their entry in any way before the jury have made their selection. Any breach of this rule will render the entry invalid.

## **7. Jury**

7.1 The international jury will consist of 4 architects from different continents, plus one other experienced theatre practitioner.

7.2. In case of the absence of a juror, OISTAT will assign another qualified person as a member of the jury.

7.3 The jury will produce a report explaining the reasons for its decisions and commenting on the prize-winning and honourably mentioned entries.

7.4. The report of the jury will be published on the OISTAT website and distributed by the OISTAT Centres.

7.5 The jury will select at least 25 entries for an exhibition at the Prague Quadrennial in June 2011.

7.6. A brochure illustrating at least 25 entries will be published and will be available at the Prague Quadrennial 2011, after which distribution will be by way of the OISTAT Centres or via the internet.

7.7 OISTAT will offer the results of the competition to the press (publications covering theatre design and architecture)

## **8. Time schedule**

### **1 July 2010**

Official start of the competition  
Brief and Conditions posted on the OISTAT Website and notification sent to OISTAT Centres and schools of architecture.

### **1 October 2010**

Final date for questions.  
Questions can be submitted by email to [tac2011@oistat.org](mailto:tac2011@oistat.org). Questions received after this date will not be considered.  
Answers to questions will be posted on the OISTAT website from 1 November 2010.

### **11 March 2011**

Closing date for despatch of entries and payment

### **25 March 2011**

Latest date for receipt of entries.

### **30 March - 13 April 2011**

Jury meeting and report.

### **16 April 2011**

Notification of the prize-winners.

### **16-26 June 2011**

Exhibition of prize-winning and selected entries at the Prague Quadrennial.

### **17 June 2011**

Official announcement and prize-giving at the Architecture Section of The Prague Quadrennial to be held at Prague Crossroads.

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